

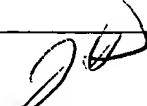


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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/971,993	10/05/2001	Danny W. Bilyeu	4944US (01-03-105)	4144
7590	02/11/2004		EXAMINER	
MARSHALL GERSTEIN & BORUN 6300 SEARS TOWER 233 SOUTH WACKER DRIVE CHICAGO, IL 60606-6402			ENATSKY, AARON L	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3713	T3
DATE MAILED: 02/11/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/971,993	BILYEU ET AL. 
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Aaron L Enatsky	3713

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 November 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**.                            2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 29-54 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 29-54 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Amendment***

Examiner acknowledges receipt of amendment on 11/17/03.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 29-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by WO-00/32286 to Bennett et al. (“Bennett”). Bennett teaches a gaming or poker machine that incorporates random events combined with morphing/animated characters to aid in dispersing prizes (1:1-2:23). The character or “interactive symbol” is described in a plethora of embodiments wherein the character can interact with symbols displayed on the reels based on some triggering event (2:31-8:11 and Figs. 20-28). Bennett also teaches that the triggering mechanisms that can be used in any of the forgoing embodiments can be one of a periodic trigger, random trigger, external triggering event, specific operator activity, and specific player activity (11:8-35).

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed 11/17/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant has cancelled prior claims 1-28 and added new claims 29-54. While Applicant's new claims differ from the explicit recitation of the previous prior art of record, the new feature of the present claimed invention remain obvious over the prior art. Applicant is attempting to distinguish over the previously presented prior art by claiming a player selected

symbol would be the symbol directed for transformation/interaction with a designated “interactive symbol”. Applicant is essentially claiming the mechanism used to determine the scope of the interaction between two symbols, wherein the randomization mechanism of the instant invention is a player selection. The prior art on the other hand, teaches a processor randomly selecting what symbols will be selected and slated for interaction/transformation with the interactive symbol. The only difference lies with the mechanism to choose the symbol for interaction. Examiner believes that this difference is a matter of obviousness, and points to Applicant’s disclosure discussing the interchangeability of the claimed features (Applicant’s Specification [0014]). Further support for this position is found in the rejection above, which details a reference that clearly anticipates Applicant’s claimed invention.

### ***Conclusion***

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Aaron L Enatsky whose telephone number is 703-305-3525. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-6 M-Th.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Teresa Walberg can be reached on 703-308-1327. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

ALE; *TMW*

*T. Walberg*  
Teresa Walberg  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
Group 3700